"EXCEPT YE BECOME —"

NANCY BURROUGHS sat in her pastor's study and faced him with earnest eyes.

"You preached a wonderful sermon last Sunday, Dr. Parsons," she burst out, "and you set a very wonderful ideal before us: to live here and now as if it were in the kingdom of heaven. But it is simply impossible—for me, at least. Some girls, leading a sheltered life at home, may be able to do it, but not a business girl like me.

"All day long there's nothing but the hurry and bustle and hard work of the office. At home it's worry about the cost of the children's shoes and the rise in food prices. And there's more work at home, for I help with the housework and the sewing in my spare time. Sounds like the kingdom of heaven, doesn't it?" Nancy's tone was almost bitter.

"I know some poor girls to whom it would sound like heaven," said Dr. Parsons gently. "Regular work in an excellent office, a good home to live in, with a loving mother and father and little brothers and sisters to love—even to worry over sometimes. But I want to tell you a story, Nancy, one that a friend of mine told me recently.

"My friend is a nose-and-throat specialist, and one day a little girl was brought to his clinic for a small operation on her nose. For some reason he could not give the little thing any anæsthetic; so he took a fifty-cent piece out of his pocket and put it into her hand.

"'That's for you to spend exactly as you like as soon as this is over,' he said cheerily. 'I'm going to hurt you a little, I'm afraid, but if you'll take a very good look at the fifty cents before I begin, and then hold it tight in your hand and keep thinking of what you saw all the time while I'm at work, it won't hurt nearly so much.'

"The child went through the operation unusually well, and the doctor congratulated himself on his bright idea.

"'You're a very brave little girl,' he said, patting her on the head, 'and pretty soon you can go out and spend your money. Tell me all the things you thought of while I was at work.'

"'I thought of the words,' said the little girl.

"'The words?' repeated the doctor. 'The date, you mean?' It was so long since he'd really noticed a coin that he hardly remembered that they had any words on them.

"'Why, no! Those are numbers. I mean the words at the top, "In God We Trust,"' said the little girl quite simply. 'It was the first half dollar I ever had, so I never saw them before, but it's lovely to have them there. So the folks that have half dollars can always think about that.'"

Dr. Parsons paused, and for a moment or two there was silence. Then Nancy spoke abruptly.

"And I," she said, "have had half dollars all my life, and never thought about it once! The kingdom of heaven must be like beauty, 'in the eye of the beholder.' Is that what you mean?"

"Exactly—only I was thinking of some older words still:

"'Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.'

"The kingdom of heaven really means your Father's kingdom, doesn't it, Nancy? But to see it as your Father's kingdom, your Father's world, you must have the loving, trustful eyes of your Father's child."

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